

Characteristics of a Successful Distance Learner

Motivated and committed...have a compelling reason to take the course and do not let personal and professional circumstances hinder them.

Independent and prepared to work independently...they are active learners and like to ask questions. They realize that part of their success in a course is self-determined and dependent on their own abilities, so they ask for what they need. They have become familiar with all available resources and know where to turn for help.

Good organizational and time management skills...get things done ahead of time. They know the amount of time they have to work on a course. They are able to anticipate the demands on their time and are ready to learn. Research shows that students who complete initial assignments promptly are more likely to finish the entire course. They have the discipline to study without external reminders but enjoy setting up their own schedule and having flexibility. They seem driven to complete all work. They are persistent. Falling behind in course work is the biggest problem for distance learners. If you get behind it can be difficult to catch up.

Adapt to new learning environments...can generally figure out the instructions for an assignment on their own. They look forward to learning new technology skills.

Familiar with computers...have been prepared to interact with the instruction via the available technology. They have had orientation activities to unfamiliar learning situations. They know how to access web documents, send email, and attach a file to an email message.

Like to support each other in small groups.

Learning Hint: Learning style inventories, which you will often see attached to course web pages have no validity and have no effect on outcomes of distance learning. Don't waste your time with them. Although learning styles are recognized in educational theory, these inventories are not good instruments to assess learning style.

